

Minnesota Democratic leaders and contributors. Mercer worked with the O'Connors to plan a "prospecting" brunch at the O'Connors' home in Minneapolis for that purpose on Sunday, March 5, 1995.<sup>205</sup> At the function, Patrick O'Connor welcomed the guests and introduced Fowler, who spoke to the gathering and also met privately with top finance prospects after the function. Coincidentally, at this time O'Connor also was looking for an opportunity to introduce Kitto to Fowler.<sup>206</sup> O'Connor made sure that Kitto was invited to the March 5 event, but Kitto was unable to attend.

The March 5 brunch was not Fowler's first encounter with O'Connor. Fowler recalled meeting O'Connor in the early 1970s, and felt the two men had developed a casual friendship rooted in their involvement in national Democratic politics. Fowler looked to O'Connor as one of the more senior, established members of the DNC. Nonetheless, O'Connor told investigators he could not recall ever having directly met Fowler prior to the March 5 brunch event.

Fowler's national and party prominence increased radically when he was elected National Chairman of the DNC on Jan. 21, 1995, having been nominated for the post by President Clinton after Clinton received the counsel of his Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Political Affairs, Harold Ickes. Following the Democrats' disastrous performance in the 1994 mid-term elections, when they lost control of Congress, and with the President facing a re-election contest less than two years away, the White House had decided to change the leadership at the DNC and selected Fowler.

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<sup>205</sup>Event Briefing from David Mercer to Chairman Fowler, March 3, 1995.

<sup>206</sup>The brunch briefing memo suggests that O'Connor was identifying Kitto to the DNC as a resource for Indian outreach. O'Connor cannot now recall if he also had determined by that time that Fowler and the DNC could be helpful to him and Kitto on the Hudson matter.